

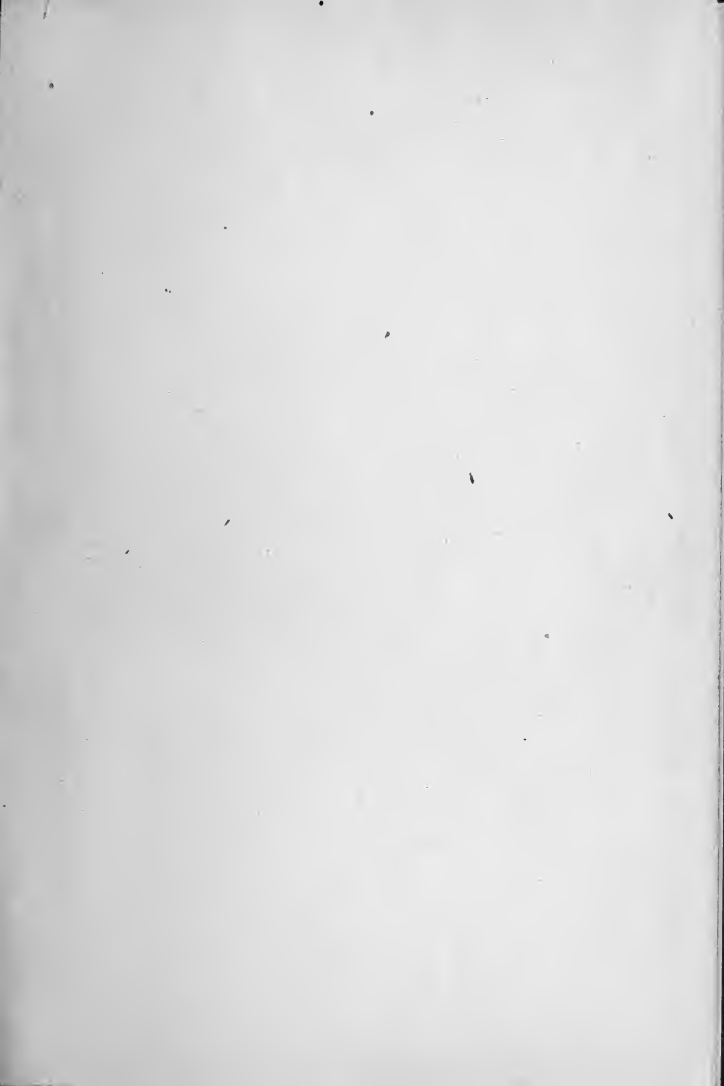
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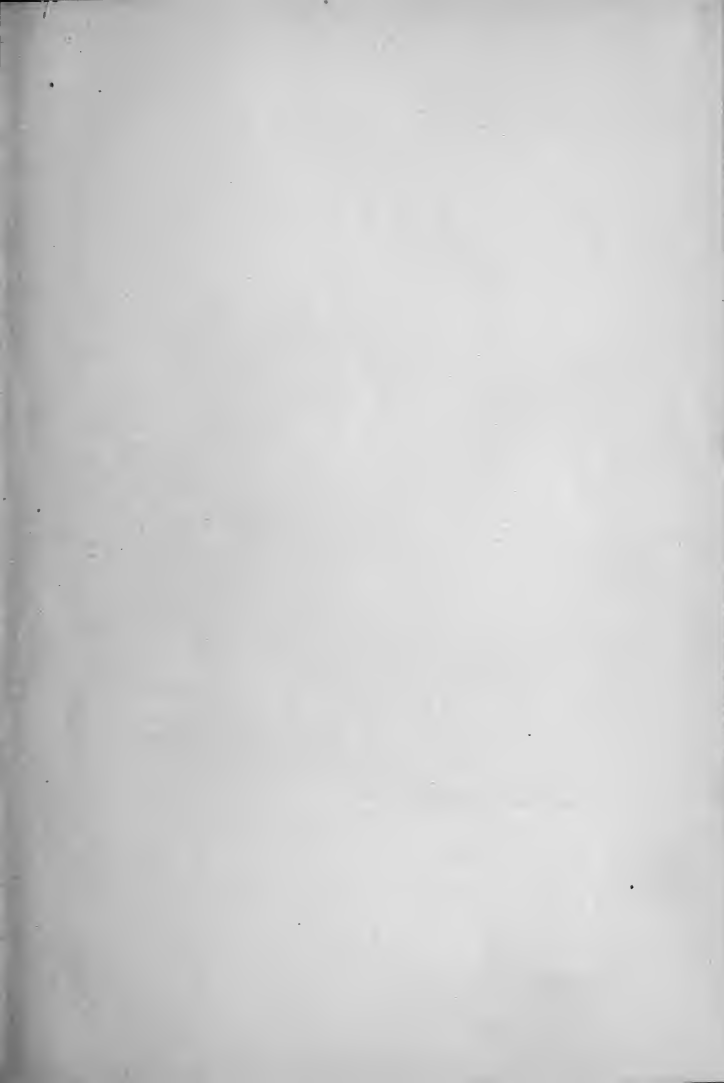
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VIEWS OF HEAVEN.

By ✓
Adeline J. Bayard

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VIEWS OF HEAVEN.

YOU ask, dear friend, that I should write out for you my views of Heaven, or the future state. You know I have been for some years dwelling on the border land, and am waiting and watching for the words, "The Master has come and calleth for thee." Therefore, it is natural that my thoughts should dwell upon that inheritance which God has promised to those who love him, and that I should seek all the knowledge I can obtain respecting

"Jerusalem, my happy home."

I have collated, for my own use, the views of different authors, dead and living, and noted every sentence in sermons or papers that expressed views I thought were at least not opposed to any we might deduce from the study of God's Word; and if it will be of any comfort for you to read, you shall have my views. But you must understand they are mostly expressed in the words of others.

First, let me say, the glorification of believers is invested with profound mysteries which the testimony of God does not unveil, and unto which our sin-weakened minds could not attain. We should not therefore give unrestrained license to our fancies, but keep to the landmarks of revealed truth. If we believe in Christ, we have divine assurance that God has given us power to become His sons; and while the glory pertaining to this sonship and adoption is postponed and reserved

for another world ; while the details of our condition and blessedness are yet among those “ secret things which belong unto the Lord our God ;” yet we have such a testimony given us that we may cheerfully walk by faith and live by hope, and be content with the assurance, “ We shall be like him.” Why God did not give us descriptions of heavenly life I do not trouble myself to wonder. He had His reasons, and that is enough for me. The Bible specifies very little about the minor arrangements of eternity in any way. The mystery of the Bible lies not so much in what it says, as in what it does not say. Solomon says : “ It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.” The Psalmist says : “ Thy footsteps are not known.” Christ said : “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” Perhaps we have been told all that we can comprehend in this our sinful state. Chalmers says :

“It were well for us all could we carefully draw the line between the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God and those that are revealed to us and our children.” Whately says : “Precisely because we know so little of these subjects, it is the more important we should endeavour so to dwell on them as to make the most of what knowledge we have.” While not “wise above what is written,” we should attempt most studiously to be wise up to what is written. I do not wish to fancy or conjecture anything the Bible contradicts, nor believe as indisputable truth anything the Bible does not give me. Some, from the constitution of their minds, may find it easy to abstain from every path of excursive meditation ; not so with others, who are irresistibly borne forward to the vast field of universal contemplation. Whatever may be our first experience after leaving the body, it does not seem to me

probable it is to be a revolutionary one. It seems more in analogy with God's dealings that a quiet process should open our eyes, in the light that would blind if it came upon us as a flash. It may be the faces of dear familiar friends will be the first to greet us, that they may lead us, as we are able, within the veil, till we are used to the wonder and the glory, and then lead on to Him whom we could not bear to see at first. It may be the reverse. Christ may meet us and lead us to our friends. But whatever Heaven is, we are always to bear in mind that it is being with Jesus—that should be the first and greatest attraction to us. "Absent from the body," "present with the Lord." Our change may not be something so entirely new as we seem to think necessary: it is probably only the purifying and perfecting of what we are now. We were made "in the image of God"—sin changed and defiled it.

Take away sin and its effects, and we will again be in His image. I do not hold to an indefinite Heaven, where the glory of God is to crowd out all individuality and all human joy, though God himself will be the first, naturally and of necessity. What can Heaven be to us but a song of love, that is the same to us “yesterday, and to-day, and forever!”—the love that, in the mystery of an eternity which we may never fully understand, could choose death, and rejoice in the choosing; and what is more, could love life—such a life—for us three and thirty years.

It seems to me we shall learn to see in God the centre of all possibilities of joy. The great trouble with most now, is a desire to materialize everything, and bring them to our level. What we need is to spiritualize ourselves—not to materialize Heaven. Not so much what the mansion is, but how to gain

entrance there, should be the subject of our thoughts. Not to vex ourselves as to what the spiritual body is to be, but a fit spirit to inhabit it. Still I believe Heaven is a place, not merely a state. It has locality and is material. It is our Father's mansions, prepared for us by the Saviour. The "City of God;" the "New Jerusalem;" the "Inheritance of the Saints." A pure river of the "water of life" will be there; and the "tree of life," which bears twelve fruits monthly: and we shall serve God, and see His face, and reign forever and ever. And "the nations of them which are saved" shall be in it. The fruits of sin shall have passed away. We shall praise there on "harps of gold," and sing and worship there. Heaven is substance—this earth the shadow; that, the reality—this, the dream. Jesus aimed to make duty paramount to knowledge; the heart superior to the intel-

lect ; and His glory is manifested in “concealing” everything, save that which tends to disclose our danger and deliverance. Let the sublime premise of our logic be this: “God is love,” and our conclusion this: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Let the silence of our Saviour with respect to Heaven, as on other subjects, admonish us that our chief work is preparation for the life that lies just beyond this, and whose boundary is not far from each one. “I go to prepare a place for you.” “Where I am, ye shall be.”

Many things may be known from the Bible about Heaven, after close study, which are not perceived at first sight or thought. Those whose eyes are ardently, piously, and lovingly directed to their future home, will get farthest in their knowledge of it. The idea is a glorious one—that all systems revolve round one common centre, which may be termed the throne of

God! Scripture says the "Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens." "A glorious high throne from the beginning, is the place of my sanctuary."

The nature of our union with Christ as believers forbids the idea some entertain that the soul sinks into unconscious sleep—"Because I live, ye shall live also." This is not merely a moral union, but a living one. "He that believeth, hath eternal life:" it begins here, and as it is eternal, must live on through death and the grave. This union begins in spiritual regeneration, and can never end or be suspended. "Glittering generalities" are cold—I need something actual, something real and pleasant about Heaven. I do not believe God would create beautiful, pure, unselfish loves, just for our threescore years. The object of this world is to fit us for another, and I do not think that on passing out of it, we lose our individuality,

and throw off forever its gifts, its lessons, and its memories. We shall be ourselves in Heaven, and recognize those we love here. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob:" and will not we know we are with those very saints and recall their earthly memories? Affections are not left behind us at death—love's memories are not lost. Death does not destroy nor mutilate the mortal—the creature will enter Heaven; no new creation, no stranger spirit. Man with a human body, man with a human heart; renewed, sanctified, yet "clothed upon with immortality." Christ said to Mary, "Thy brother shall rise again;" still to be her brother, or where were the consolation? Our friends will love us there; wait for us; joy to see us. Mary did not love Jesus less after Lazarus was restored to her.

Look at the expressions: "risen together;"

“sitting together in heavenly places ;” “sitting together at the right hand of God.” If these mean anything, they mean recognitions, friendships, enjoyments. Did not the three disciples know and see Moses and Elias on the mount ? Did they not talk with each other and with Christ ? Did not John, in Revelations, talk with the angel, who “showed him these things ?” Neither reason, nor the Bible, nor common sense forbids our thinking that, if we go out into this other life forgetting, we become another than ourselves. Of course we cannot demonstrate it. Our sainted friends, though changed and out of sight, do not forget, nor cease to love, and I love to think are often present with us : “I believe in the communion of saints.” But though the belief that those in Heaven know what occurs on earth must rest on conjecture and analogy, I think they often are permitted to ; and that our

thoughts there shall continue to be our own ; not known to all, or individuality would be destroyed, and there would be no use in intercourse, which there is no doubt we shall have in Heaven. God will not place us in an idle world. Our best energies will be called forth. God works by the use of means, and may He not probably send those to comfort, teach and help us, who so understandingly can reach the peculiarities of our nature, and thus be “ministering spirits” to minister to those who shall be heirs with them of the “great salvation?” I hold no spiritualistic view that we can have converse here with our friends “beyond the river ;” for if we could speak to them, or they to us, there could be no death ; for there would be no separation.

What means the text: “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,” if the departed are not permit-

ted to keep us in sight? An archangel could not understand, nor reach our necessities, nor bear with nor love us, as those who have left us and borne our sinful nature. God's power of inventing happiness is not to be blocked up by any obstacles we may suggest. Perhaps our sainted and redeemed ones can bear the sight of our trials, and sufferings, and wanderings, for the peace and the "exceeding weight of glory" they know await us. This subject does perplex me. I believe we shall be happy at once on leaving the body. Freed from sin, and "with Jesus," how could it be otherwise? But much happier when, having stood before the "judgment seat of Christ," we shall "be recompensed at the resurrection of the just;" not on account of works, but according to works, and united to an incorruptible and glorious body. Then we shall be "heirs of God," "joint heirs with Christ;" having suf-

ferred with Him, we shall be glorified together. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

It is to be presumed that our tastes and capacities will be enlarged and ennobled after the resurrection. I accept wholly and without wavering God's statement about the resurrection. I neither know nor care how it is to be effected. Look at a splendid butterfly, emerging from its dark and gloomy bed. Something of this very body will be preserved for the completion of another "glorious body;" yet it may be as unlike to our former one as the beauteous, gorgeous butterfly is unlike to its previous crawling state. God can never be at a loss for a way. Whately says: "It is not a little remarkable that the prevailing opinion should be, that the very same particles of bodily substance which are laid in the grave,

or otherwise disposed of, are to be reassembled and reunited at the resurrection, so as to form, as is supposed, the same body in which the soul resided before death, and that the Scripture teaches us to believe this. Paul's words, however, express almost as strongly as words can, the direct contrary. His illustration is that of seed sown. 'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' Paul reminds us that a grain of corn when sown dies—is dissolved; its structure destroyed, never to be restored, which is the very illustration used by our Lord, also, in speaking of the same subject: 'Verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' It is not a plant that is sown, but a seed; we raise from it not the same thing sown, but a plant which is very different. 'Thou sowest not that body that shall be . . . but God giveth it a body, as it hath

pleased him, and to every seed his own body.' It is admitted by Paul that 'we shall all be changed'—different from what we are; but many cling to the idea that the same particles of matter which belong to our bodies now must be brought together and reunited. This notion is not authorized by Scripture, and is liable to many objections, hard to be answered, and likely to shake men's faith in the whole doctrine. It is said and believed that all the particles of matter which compose our bodies are changed several times during our life; why is it then to be supposed that the identical particles of matter which belonged to any body at his death must be brought together at his resurrection, in order to make the same body? The same person who was an infant, and is a man, is not called the same person from any resemblance between an infant and a man, but from belonging to the same soul, conveying

feelings and perceptions to the same mind, and obeying the directions of the same will. So that if, at the resurrection, we are clothed with bodies which we, in this way, perceive to belong to us, and to be ours, it signifies nothing of what particles of bodily substance they are composed. Throughout Scripture, the phrase, 'resurrection of the body,' or 'resurrection of the flesh,' nowhere occurs. It speaks of man's resurrection 'from the dead;' of his 'vile body' being 'changed;' of his being 'clothed upon,' &c. They who sleep in Jesus will be raised up with bodies which they will feel to be their own, though far different from the 'earthly tabernacles' of flesh and blood, and 'like unto the glorious body of Christ.'"

I believe our raised bodies will be real and tangible. Jesus said to Thomas, "reach hither thy finger," &c. And He ate with His

disciples. "There are celestial bodies." We shall be raised not only spirits, but spiritual bodies. Moses and Elias had bodies when they appeared in the mount. Something like human form is probably retained. God chose it for His highest work, as given to Adam and Eve, when in unmarred beauty He made them after His own image; and we shall probably return to something like the pure ideal when raised in "glory, power, and incorruption;" for the human form was dignified in its assumption by our Saviour. His death and resurrection is a prototype of ours, and we shall be like Him. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Whatever is essentially earthy and temporary in the arrangements of this world will be wiped away there. We shall leave all the ills of flesh which sin caused, —sickness, troubles, anxieties,* cares, tempta-

tions, and tears—all passed away. No more looking for separation and death, but clothed with powers which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.” The word *material* applied to Heaven, implies no degradation, except so far as it is associated with sin. Our memories will no doubt exist, but so many greater and happier memories will fill up our thoughts, that these now present things will seem, perhaps, very small to us. Yet, remembering our past life, all the way the Lord our God has brought us, may help us to appreciate the next. Our light afflictions will seem to have been “but for a moment.” Jesus will say, “remember, ye visited me.” Abraham, in the parable, said, “Son, remember;” and I cannot think anything that has in it the elements of permanency can be lost, but sin. No testimony of another world was given by Lazarus, or Jairus’s

child, or the widow's only son. Perhaps they were suffered to forget their glimpse of spiritual life, as our vivid dreams pass away, though so real at the time. It might have unfitted them for the further duties of this life.

I have no doubt we remember the past in Heaven, "to swell the sense of being blest." What we may suppose must be in memory an interference with our happiness, I leave to God. In some way the mind must be filled; for has He not promised to wipe away all tears, and that there shall be no more sorrow? But the only thought, it seems to me, in which there can be any rest is, that Jesus, who knoweth all things from the beginning, is happy in Himself, and loves us even as the Father loves Him; and He can make like happiness possible for us, and will do so. Our conclusion in the New Jerusalem will be as it ought to be here: "He hath done all things well," for he is holy,

just and good. I do not hold to an indefinite heaven, where the "glory of God" is to crowd out all individuality, and all human joy, though God himself will be first, naturally and of necessity. Human dearness will wax, not wane, in Heaven; human friends will be loved for the love of Him; and would that it were always so now, instead of loving the creature more than the Creator. I often fancy that, somewhere and sometime, a revelation will come upon us, as a flash, of what sin really is, lighting up the lurid background of our past in such tints that the consciousness of what Jesus has done for us will be, for a time as much as heart can bear. After that, the mystery will be, not how to love Him most, but that we ever could have loved any thing, or creature, as much. Christ, with His own body, rose, ate, walked, talked; and is all our memory of this life to be swept away? He,

arisen, waits to meet His disciples. Have we been troubled with fears that in the glorified crowds of Heaven we may miss a face dearer than all the world to us? He made himself known to His friends, to Mary, to the two at Emmaus, and the bewildered group, praying and perplexed, in their closed room. Do we weary ourselves with speculations whether human love can outlive the shock of death? Mary knew how He loved her when, turning, she heard Him call, "Mary!" They knew whose "hearts burned within them by the way," when He talked with them, and tarried with them, the night being far spent. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things," even as He gives unto us eternal life? I think we may be permitted to weave our future life in with this, till it grows naturally and pleasantly into our

frequent thoughts. It is sweet to me to think we can never have an unloved moment in Heaven. Our Saviour knows us, our love, trials and failings. He knew Peter, from first to last. If we are to be like Him, we must have that clear vision which will enable us to know the hearts of those left behind, probably, and to appreciate their efforts and trials. Parables were used to explain the truth more clearly than would be done by precept; but leaving out the imagery, there is a plain statement of recognition and memory in that of Lazarus and the rich man. As Christ's love is more to us now than any human love can be, so will our friend's love be as much more to us there than here; for we learn from our great Teacher how to love, and be able to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height, "and to know the love of Christ," &c., and perhaps love like Him. God has

made the ties of love one of the strongest parts of our nature here ; is it likely He meant them to cease at the grave, and the other life be filled with new ties ? What kind of place would it be where we would all know Christ and none knew each other ? Our hearts, like the inn at Bethlehem, are often too full for our Saviour to have room there, but in Heaven, our love to friends must be in subjection to our higher love. There will be no jealousies or emulations in Heaven, to be aroused by partialities. Jesus loved John and Lazarus, Mary and Martha, with peculiar deep, clear affection, and we may love most those specially suited to us, both here and in Heaven. There should be no room in all our life for impatience, for God is in it all. The perfect work of patience is the waiting and the doing. Our low spirits at times, and our moods, may be sent us as

a means of discipline—a shadow which may pass off when its work is done.

“God hath His mysteries of grace;
Ways that we cannot tell;
And hides them deep, like the secret sleep,
Of Him He loved so well.”

It seems to me, even in Heaven, children must be purer than we who have sinned so long and so often. They cannot be what the saint is, who has fought and overcome; yet they share the same joys. I believe there will be use found in Heaven for the learning and talents of earth. If “every good and perfect gift is from above;” if He has given them to us, and we have not ill-used His gifts, nor buried them in a napkin, I believe we will retain them, and have them satisfied more completely than here. But I am willing to trust all these things to God, our loving Father.

I may find them different from what I suppose—I know I shall find them infinitely more satisfying. I believe nothing God's Word denies; I cannot overrate the beauty of His promises, therefore it does me no harm to take the comfort of some things I may only fancy. Reason does not forbid, but rather encourages, us to believe (and I think Scripture intimates it) that angels are constantly around us on earth; that the spirit is capable of hearing their mysterious whispers through the mortal veil, and they stand “ministering spirits,” in constant sympathy and communion with our spirits. If evil spirits are permitted to excite and allure our thoughts to evil, by making use of our indwelling depravity, why cannot good angels incite the Christian's mind to useful and happy thoughts, by making use of God-given indwelling grace? They interest themselves in our salvation, as evil

spirits do in our ruin. We pray, deliver us from evil (the evil one); is it not often answered through the ministry of angels? God sent an angel to Peter in prison, to Elijah in the juniper shade. No wonder they are often hovering around in the dying visions of the saints. Eager to receive the struggling spirit, they press through the veil, or lift it gently up, to the dying Christian, and look upon him with smiles of welcome. It is the "chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," at the bed of death. All the comforts which are in Scripture, in various places and ways, given to bereaved saints on earth, in reference to their pious dead, proclaim the communion and sympathy in which they still stand to them. The apostle exhorts the mourners of Thessalonica to "sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which

sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Now if we will not know those whom we thus meet again, what advantage will we gain by this unrecognizing companionship? If at the transit of death all recollections of the past were blotted out, we would stand on the eternal shore as a new creation, rather than as beings that had previous life, and history, and were to be judged according to their works. We must see the reason of our "right" to enter into the glorious temple, and that can only be by a review of our probationary state. How can we give an account of our stewardship if we do not remember the particular connections and relations in which we stood upon earth? Those of the saints who lived, loved and struggled together, though one departs "beyond the river" before the other, the cords of love and sympathy which unite them are not broken: they are still "one in Christ Jesus."

“The Spirit and the bride say, come.” The bride is the Church—part on earth, and part in Heaven. My thoughts, and feelings, and hopes crowd onward still, along the misty Jordan, on whose banks I have so long stood, I continue to walk up and down, looking anxiously across, until the day breaks ; waiting and watching for the call—“Even so, come, Lord Jesus !”

“Oh, to be ready when death shall come !

Oh, to be ready to hasten home !

No earthward clinging, no lingering gaze ;

No strife at parting, no sore amaze ;

No chains to sever, that earth hath twined ;

No spell to loosen, that love would bind.

No flitting shadows, to dim the light

Of the angel pinions, winged for flight ;

No cloud-like phantoms to fling a gloom

’Twixt Heaven’s bright portals and earth’s dark tomb.

But sweetly and gently to pass away,

From the world’s dim twilight to endless day !

To list to the music of angel lyres ;
To catch the rapture of seraph fires ;
To lean in trust on the risen One,
'Till borne away to a fadeless throne.
Oh, to be ready when death shall come !
Oh, to be ready to enter home !”

These are Bonar's sweet lines ; and I will add some others that are full of my own heart's thoughts and feelings ; and many descending, as we are, the hill of life, might enjoy them, though a sadness (not gloom) pervades them, which almost always accompanies the autumn of life, no matter how brightly it may be tinted by the brilliant hopes and joys of the life to come. You recollect those words of Paul, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” One says on this text : “Paul stands before us in the attitude of calm

Christian assurance—I believe on the Son of God. He told me at the outset I would have the flesh to crucify, and corruption to mortify ; I would have a battle to fight, enemies to conquer, a wilderness to traverse, and a race to run ; and I have found His every word true. The warning and the promise ; the danger and deliverance ; the toil and tranquillity ; the outward suffering and inward calm. And now I declare with my dying breath, that my estimate of Jesus has undergone no change. He is still my all in all—the faithful and true. I have entrusted my soul to Him, and am persuaded it is safe in His keeping. I am not making a plunge into eternity in the dark. I have weighed the grounds of my conviction ; I have looked at the soundness of the Rock, to see if it will bear me ; I have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and therefore am confident of this very thing,—that He which hath begun

a good work in me will perform it until the day of Christ." If we desire to have the same confidence in Jesus in a dying hour, we must live to Jesus as did this apostle; give Him our confidence and love, and He will prove himself faithful to the end. It may not be that we shall exhibit the same strong faith, or give expression to the same feelings of unshaken reliance on the Saviour, but we will have peace and serenity.

Do we long for the grace of assurance? Do we feel, at times, a doubt of our soul's safety? So did the apostle. He dreaded lest, "after having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway." Assurance is not a grace given to the believer and never weakened. His experience is varied, his journey not all sunshine. We are to live by faith, not sight. We have times of cloud and storm and tempest; yes, even when our hearts are glad and

joyous, so that we can say, "Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup runneth over," there are unseen agencies at work to depress and sadden the soul. One day we are bold and ardent, another sunk in despondency. To-day we realize the assurance, "I have blotted out thy transgressions," to-morrow we are weak and feeble. Long years of training and discipline are needed ere the Christian can take up the language of the apostle: but look back on the page of your experience as he did, and "be not afraid, only believe." See your pilgrimage path studded with *Ebenizers*, testifying to your Saviour's mercy and faithfulness. Think of His manifold gracious interpositions in the past, sustaining you in trial, supporting you in perplexity, helping you, when "vain was the help of man." Take these things as the pledges of faithfulness in the future, and be this your prayer, "Lord,

give me grace to trust Thee at all times ; in joy and sorrow, in sickness and health ; and in thy good time, enable me truly to say with thy servants of old, ‘I know whom I have believed,’ and ‘I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.’”

Not here, not here ! not where the sparkling waters
 Fade into mocking sands, as we draw near ;
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters :
 “ I shall be satisfied,” but oh ! not here.

Not here, where every dream of bliss deceives us ;
 Where the worn spirit never gains its goal ;
Where, haunted ever by the thoughts that grieve us,
 Across us floods of bitter memories roll.

There is a land where every pulse is thrilling
 With rapture earth’s sojourners may not know ;
Where Heaven’s repose the weary heart is stilling,
 And peacefully life’s time-tossed currents flow.

Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
 Lies the fair country where our hearts abide ;

And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us
Than these few words : I shall be satisfied.

Satisfied ! satisfied ! the spirit's yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds ;
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds :—

Shall they be satisfied ? The soul's vague longings,
The aching void which nothing earthly fills ?
Oh ! what desires upon my heart are thronging,
As I look upward to the heavenly hills !

Thither my weak and weary steps are tending,
Saviour and Lord ! with thy frail child abide !
Guide me towards home, where, all my wanderings ending,
I there shall see Thee, and “ be satisfied ! ”

R. A. R.,
Mount Holly.

We are each of us

“ Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown ;
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last gleam is flown ;

Till the night of earth is faded
From the heart once full of day ;
Till the stars of Heaven are breaking
Through the twilight soft and gray.

“Only waiting till the reapers
Have the last sheaf gathered home,
For the summer-time is faded
And the autumn winds have come.
Quickly, reapers, gather quickly
The last ripe hours of my heart ;
For the bloom of life is withered,
And I hasten to depart.

“Only waiting till the angels
Open wide the mystic gate,
At whose bars I long have lingered,
Weary, tired, and desolate.
Even now I hear their footsteps
And their voices far away ;
If they call me, I am waiting :
Only waiting to obey.

“Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown ;

Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last gleam is flown :
Then from out the gathering darkness,
Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
By whose light my soul shall gladly
Tread its pathway to the skies."

And as we are "watchers at the gate," we
can say, with Dr. Guthrie,

"I'm kneeling at the threshold,
Weary, faint and sore;
Waiting for the dawning, for the opening of the door;
Waiting till the Master
Shall bid me rise and come
To the glory of His presence, to the gladness of His home.

"A weary path I've travelled,
'Mid darkness, storm and strife,
Bearing many a burden, struggling for my life;
But now the dawn is breaking,
My toil will soon be o'er,
I'm kneeling at the threshold, my hand is on the door."

“Methinks I hear the voices
Of the blessed, as they stand
Singing in the sunshine of the far-off sinless land ;
Oh ! would that I were with them
Amid their shining throng,
Mingling in their worship, and joining in their song !

“Some friends that started with me,
Have entered long ago ;
One by one they left me, struggling with the foe.
Their pilgrimage was shorter,
Their triumphs sooner won :
How lovingly they’ll hail me, when all my toils are done !

“With them the blessed angels
That know not grief, nor sin ;
I saw them by the portals prepared to let me in.
Oh ! Lord, I wait Thy pleasure,
Thy time and way are best,
But I’m tired, worn, and weary, oh ! Father, bid me rest !”

There is a kind of weariness, a home-sickness, which an aged Christian often feels. It is well described as “The solitude of Christ.”

“The bodily sensation which no well friend can understand ; the inexpressible mental weariness which a healthy brain cannot conceive of ; the absolute forgetfulness of what a healthy sensation is, which makes it impossible for a sick person to enter into the spring-tide of life around him ; the suppression of speech about his own condition, through fear of being a discomfort to his friends ; the struggle to be silent, when speech, if indulged, would be irritable ; the nights of watching, when he can hear the breathing of the world asleep, and when he seems to have more companionship with creatures of the darkness than with his own kind ; and, above all, the forced withdrawal from the toils of past years, with the closing up of the little space which he occupies in the world’s thoughts, and the drooping of his friendships, because of his inability to cultivate them ; in short, that consciousness (premonitory of the

grave) that the world is sweeping by him and over him,—all these peculiarities of an invalid's life force him back perhaps from all human ties. They tend to create a sense of isolation from which no relief is practicable, if it does not help him to come into sympathy with Christ's solitude, and so help him to know Christ's sympathy with him. When disease plainly crowds a Christian into moral loneliness, he cannot be mistaken in using it as one of God's expedients for schooling him. You cannot go wrong if, practically, your soul comes nearer to Christ. We do not know that it matters much whether we get to Heaven by the easiest way or not. It is not safe for us to choose the way. What is death—the process, I mean—but the finale of this withdrawing from human sympathies and helps? We die alone. The soul, before it quits the body, generally recedes for a while from sense of

earthly things. Friends know little or nothing of its thoughts. It is like the still voice of nature calling the soul back into solitude with God. These moments may be full of "God's silence," in which He draws the departing spirit lovingly into consciousness of His own presence."

Any invalid like you and I can enter fully into the truth of these lines. I think with Harbaugh, that "there is too much of a tendency toward making Heaven a mere subject of feeling in the soul, without regarding it also as an object of hope toward which we are directed to look for full and final satisfaction. That region of rest and peace into which this life, if it is a life "hid with Christ in God," is at length to merge, is too much ignored: just as if earth could be bright without light from above. We need more of that old faith which boasted less of spiritualism than we hear of now,

but felt a nearer fellowship with the world of spirits, was more really under the influence of spiritual powers,—that faith which was faith only because it was the evidence of things not seen. Vague and floating ideas of Heaven weaken faith and render unsteady our religious life. We must lay definite and firm hold upon the hope set before us, which entereth into that within the veil. Heaven is described in this day as such a sublimated and ethereal state, so abstracted and removed from all the sympathies of the present life, that to many it seems profane to claim a present fellowship with it. Practically we are taught the heavenly life is so unlike this, to be entered by such a violent transition, that, publican-like, we ought to stand afar off, hardly turning our eyes towards it. Instead of cold abstractions, we need a reviving of those father-land feelings which will enable us to approach our heavenly inheritance like

children long absent going home. To be in Heaven is to sit down at table with patriarchs and saints—to come to the general assembly and church of the first-born—to walk forth in company with the “Lamb that was slain”—to repose as children upon “our Father’s” bosom, and have by His hand all tears wiped from our eyes. Can we be children and not think of our Father’s house? Heirs and not long for our inheritance? May we not safely measure our interest in that blissful place by the strength of our desire after it? In the case of the saints, when they grow weary and burdens press sorely, God shows them the “first fruits from Canaan,” and says, “Behold the earnest of your inheritance, eat and live.” There is indeed a heavenly foretaste, more full, satisfying, and intensely delightful, the nearer we approach the close of life. I think, beyond a doubt, the soul in its last moments of stay

upon earth, is so far free from its inward affinities with the body as to see already the glorious realities of that world which it is just entering. Angels are to gather the harvest. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" and at the moment dearest earthly friends must retire, we may assume that they offer their sympathies and offices of love, and the dying Christian may perceive as within a curtain the forms, outlines, and features they cannot discern wholly. There will be degrees of happiness in Heaven, no doubt, for we will be rewarded according to our works. The saint who has been less useful will be happy; but his happiness, though also eternal and to him full, must be less wide and intense. Paul, counted worthy to suffer so much for Christ, will be happier than one "saved as by fire." It is the different degrees of grace which measure the different

degrees of glory. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42, confirms this truth. Therefore, my dear old friend, let us run with zeal and patience the race set before us, "looking unto Jesus" and the bright cloud of witnesses, and reaching for a high prize set before us.

With Faith our guide,
White-robed and innocent to tread the way,
Why fear to plunge in Jordan's rolling tide
And find the haven of eternal day?

The sinless body of our first parent, which at its creation was "very good," became weak, corrupted, and degraded by sin; but it is again to be made powerful, incorruptible, and glorious by redemption. As the seed sown perishes below to appear above, so our change is from the imperfect and earthly to the perfect and heavenly. Our transformation is at the same time a glorification. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and

the resurrection from the dead," die no more: "for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Jesus "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Already in life here, the spirit, dwelling in the saints, banishes more and more of the life of nature. In Heaven the victory will be complete. There the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the bodies of the saints as a quickening power, will so permeate the matter of the new body as to quicken it with His own life and render it radiant with His own glory. Rom. viii. 10, 11. And I believe the worship of Heaven is the same in kind, only higher in degree, as that on earth. We read (Rev. v. 9) that the saints above do call to mind the Lamb slain, and the blood that was shed in their redemption. Therefore may not the blessed eucharistic communion of the Lord,

in some sense and in some form, continue in heaven? Matt. xxvi. 29 pointed forward to some scene of holy joy from which they might point back to that sacramental feast, and recognize the unity of the cup on earth with the cup above. I cannot believe there is pure sublimated spiritualism even in Heaven, for it makes heavenly communion a mere imagination; it ignores the idea of a real kingdom and church, with a visible head and visible members, and it seems incompatible with the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the body. If they are figures, I feel disposed to seek something behind such expressions as, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;" "will I give to eat of the hidden manna," "the tree of life," "the water of life," being called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and sitting "down with

Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God."

And now, my friend, if "gathering up these fragments,"—condensing the views of many authors (to which perhaps you may not have access), has given you any comfort—has created in you a more intense longing for our heavenly home and fitness for it, it has done all I wish. We are rapidly nearing its gates. Think of those that await us there. We have children in Heaven—they left us as infants. Infants were the first Christian martyrs. Did not those of Bethlehem die for Christ's sake? Afterwards He died for them. "To and for infants He became an infant, sanctifying infants." There is no family undivided: part on earth, part in Heaven. I do not agree with Bickersteth, that "a babe in glory is a babe for ever." Surely they must advance in knowledge, and our babies may be our teachers to instruct and lead us to

the feet of Jesus. Longfellow's views are far more soothing and ennobling to my mind.

“Day after day, we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

“Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with rapture wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;—

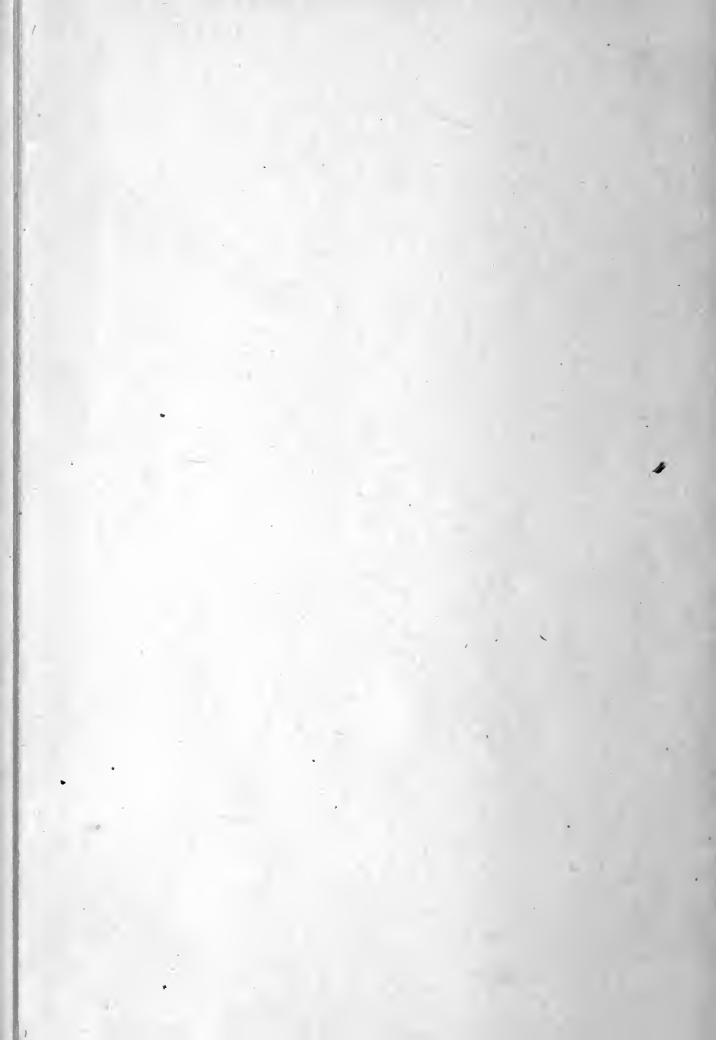
But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

“'Tis a work
Of many a dark hour, and of many a prayer,
To bring the heart back from an infant gone!”

But now we can say, thanks be to God!
“They are safe with Jesus: Hallelujah!”
“We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship

Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty!" "For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."





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